

Companion to Roman Satire, ed. Kirk Freudenburg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 177–91, esp. 185–88. Rosen's best contribution is in teasing out connections with his own previous discussions: why does Naevolus mention a slave "as single as the broad eye of Polyphemus" (9.64–65) or end his complaint with the Sirens (9.148–50), if not to relate the satirist's alter-ego to the literary postures first assumed in the *Odyssey*? There is more here even than Rosen says: scratch Corydon (9.102) and you find Polyphemus (via Virgil, *Ecl.* 2), but that only reinforces the importance of the tradition he is teaching us.

In his first chapter, Rosen discusses Aristotle's insistence that artistic mimesis "had a different experiential, even ontological, status from lived reality" (35). He returns to this subject in his final chapter. When Critias blamed Archilochus for making a public display of *ponēria* in his poetry, was he naïve in his failure to distinguish between play selves and real selves? Is there an answer to the Platonic fear that one is shaped by the roles one assumes? Rosen points to a passage in *Republic* 396e which seems to make a double concession: a respectable person is ashamed to play a base role, in part because he is untrained to do so, unless for a joke. Space for a respectable comic poet opens up, but quickly closes again in *Laws* 816d–e where comic roles are reserved for "slaves and paid foreigners" (260). Hellenistic critics offer a different view. Eratosthenes insists that poetry is for entertainment not education. A fragment of Philodemus seems to say that ancient audiences admired Archilochus and Hipponax for representing bad characters, provided that they were well drawn. Rosen may be in danger of turning archaic Greece into a world of artistic connoisseurs, "a time when people were capable of keeping these critical realms (morality and poetic value) separate" (265), but the closing chapter on trends in ancient literary criticism offers a useful coda to the case studies which have preceded it.

Readers attracted by the word "satire" in the book's title may be surprised not to reach Rome until page 207, but walking less familiar ground was, for me at least, a salutary experience. I think this book will spark new approaches in scholars working right across the comic spectrum.

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CHARLES MCNELIS. *Statius' Thebaid and the Poetics of Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. x + 203 pp. Cloth, \$90.

In this well-focused study, Charles McNelis gives what is due both to the poetics of Statius' epic and to what John Henderson has called its "political intelligence" (*PCPS* 37 [1991]: 52). Regarding the poem as a product of its time both in terms of poetics and politics, McNelis shows that Statius uses the considerable arsenal of the Latin poets' ability to be intertextual to create a work that addresses

the particular situation of post-civil wars Flavian Rome. McNelis finds that Statius proposes that the epic teleology of the Golden Age's reestablishment under Augustus that Virgil presents (albeit with some ambiguity) "has been thwarted and/or challenged, thus suggesting the fragile nature of any claim—even claims that define a society—to have brought an end to civil war" (177). Instead, Statius suggests that while it is possible for a particular civil conflict to come to an end, the results of it are ever with us and, further, that resolution comes in the form of *clementia* which is available to all on an individual basis from an entity that takes no blood sacrifice and is aniconic (163; *Theb.* 12.487–88, 493–94). A multifaceted challenge to the Virgilian/Augustan narrative of communal *imperium sine fine* guaranteed by Jove is manifest here.

In order to make the case that Augustan/Virgilian teleology does not fit Flavian Rome, Statius' particular strategy is a resort to Callimachus whose criticism of the epic genre had already made frequent appearances in Latin poetry. McNelis sees Statius restaging over the course of the epic the conflict that Callimachus (in *Aetia* 1 and elsewhere) presents between finely worked poetry and overdone epic. This conflict then reflects the presence of civil war in the literary-generic contouring of the poem. The presence of this conflict also ensures, in McNelis' estimation, that the *Thebaid* is most emphatically not the "one continuous song" (*Aetia* 1.1.3: ἐν δέισμα διηγεῖς) that Callimachus presents as the undesirable goal of epic composition and instead "replicate[s]" civil war "in the very fibres of the poem" (1).

After the introduction, McNelis presents in the first chapter ("Gods, Humans and the Literary Tradition") a discussion of *Thebaid* 1 with special attention paid to the story of Coroebus and the particularly malevolent Apollo therein. McNelis underscores in this story (significantly an *aetion*) the essentially hostile nature of the gods in the poem and the blending of them with chthonic forces, exemplified by Apollo's killing of Python and his revenge, via a baby-eating monster, for the death of a baby born to a young woman he had raped. This story promises—and it is a promise that the epic delivers—that humans can hardly expect a settled existence with Jove as beneficent ruler.

The second chapter ("Beginning") foregrounds discussion of the necklace made by Vulcan, the Cyclopes, and the Telchines for Harmonia. McNelis sees in the necklace a product from the god of the forge's workshop that comments on this epic in as serious a manner as the shields of Achilles and Aeneas comment on their respective epics. It is here that McNelis makes a key connection to the *Aetia*, for it is the Telchines whom Callimachus takes to task at 1.1.1. While at times he overstates the power of the necklace to cause things to happen (e.g., 51), McNelis is right to emphasize its significance. The necklace promises communal dissolution from the hands of the gods just as surely as the shield of Aeneas promises reintegration, likewise overseen by divine forces. Too, it is fitting that the poet of the *Silvae* would focus on a luxurious item such as this.

In the third chapter ("Nemea"), McNelis sees the Callimachean aspects of the plot derail the warlike plan of Vulcan and the Telchines in the famous

digression at Nemea. McNelis draws the reader's attention to the fact that the great body of water that is epic has been reduced to but a little stream while the plot is bottled up during these books of the epic. And, too, there is the Callimachean concern with *aetia* embodied in the first giving of the Nemean Games in honor of Opheltes/Archemorus.

In chapters four and five ("Middle" and "Heroic Deaths"), McNelis charts the reemergence into prominence of the warlike plot following the digression and the struggle of this plot against persistent Callimachean elements that endeavor to cause delay. Images from the Gigantomachy abound in these later books, and these images also mark the prominent anti-Callimachean tenor of this part of the epic (125–26). But, and this is key, these struggles which make reference to the Gigantomachy and the coming of the Jovian settlement of heaven do not lead to glorious order. They instead merely bring about more disorder and eventually lead to the departure of the gods and destruction on earth.

In the sixth chapter ("End"), McNelis surveys the wreckage of epic teleology. Death and sacrifice have led to no particular communal benefit, and *clementia* available to all is the best thing there is to be had in a situation where any cessation of hostilities is best regarded as temporary. In avoiding the assertion of an overarching political/divine order, the *Thebaid* concludes with a reassertion of the Callimachean complexion that once and for all complicates the impression the poem makes. The epic, quite decisively not "one continuous song," embodies the conflict it has related and also presents a continuing protest against the epic teleologies which it both presents and undercuts.

I find myself in substantial agreement with McNelis. His approach to the poem often generates insights. Among the strengths of this book is the great skill his close readings show (e.g., 30, 54). He also brings to bear the works of a broad array of Latin and Greek poets. The novel privileging of Callimachus is likewise welcome as it makes sense from a biographical angle (Statius' background was Greek), and the use of Callimachus would have been a logical course of action for a poet who wished to query the epic teleology proposed by Virgil and Augustus and, thence, passed on to the Flavian dynasty.

I do have a couple of cavils, however. On page 51, in the course of preparing his important discussion of the necklace, McNelis asserts that he will be using "narrative" and "story" technically as per Genette 1980. Would it have been too much to ask for more discussion than the bare phrases of definition provided, especially since McNelis is elsewhere (perhaps excessively?) discrete about the hermeneutical basis of much of what he says? Furthermore, in discussing *clementia*, McNelis notes that it provides a "personal means for closure rather than the national narratives that drive epic poetry" (155). I would like to know better what he means by "personal" here. But these faults are minor and hardly interfere with the great interest to be found in McNelis' reading of the *Thebaid*.

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